

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 05695

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM

SUBJECT: VANDEN HEUVEL MEETING WITH UN UNDER
SECRETARY GENERAL BUFFUM AND UN HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTOR
VAN BOVEN

REF: A. GENEVA 04428; B. STATE 88682; C. SANTIAGO 2702

STATE FOR MEZVINSKY

SUMMARY. IN A MEETING APRIL 13 WITH UNDERSECRETARY
GENERAL BUFFUM AND HRD DIRECTOR VAN BOVEN AMBASSADOR
VANDEN HEUVEL DISCUSSED THE CURRENT HR SITUATION IN
ETHIOPIA; THE STATUS OF THE HRC DECISION TO SEND A
DISTINGUISHED AFRICAN TO UGANDA; CHILE AND CAMBODIA. END
SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR VANDEN HEUVEL OPENED MEETING WITH UNDER
SYG BUFFUM AND HRD DIRECTOR VAN BOVEN BY EXPRESSING
CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ETHIOPIA.
REFERRING TO A RECENT LONDON TIMES ARTICLE (MARCH 22)
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WHICH DESCRIBED THE SLAUGHTER OF CHILDREN AND OTHER MASS
VIOLATIONS, THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THE NEED TO MARSHAL
INTERNATIONAL CONCERN ON THIS SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED
THE HOPE THAT THE UN COULD INQUIRE INTO THE CHARGES
AGAINST ETHIOPIA BEFORE THE 35TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION IN 1979. BUFFUM RESPONDED THAT
PROBABLY THE BEST APPROACH WOULD BE BILATERAL DIPLOMATIC

DEMARCHES BY A NUMBER OF MEMBER STATES. IN ADDITION HE EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PROTESTS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED SINCE SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS MIGHT EXERT SOME MEASURE OF PRESSURE ON THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. NOTING THAT THE GOE HAS CONTACTED THE ICRC, ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE FOR WAR DAMAGED AREAS, BUFFUM SUGGESTED THAT THE US MIGHT PRIVATELY REQUEST THE ICRC TO TALK TO THE GOE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ALSO ASK THE ORGANIZATION TO QUIETLY MONITOR THE SITUATION.

2. BUFFUM REPORTED THAT SYG WALDHEIM HAD SPOKEN WITH THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN IN NEW YORK ABOUT REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND WAS GIVEN THE REPLY THAT ETHIOPIA WAS UNDERGOING A REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR ALLOWED THAT THERE WERE DEATHS BUT ONLY AMONG THOSE WHO OPPOSED THE REVOLUTION. BUFFUM SAID THAT WALDHEIM HAD ALSO ATTEMPTED TO BRING THE ETHIOPIAN CRISIS BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL BUT WAS BLOCKED BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHO SAID THE MATTER WOULD BE HANDLED BY THE OAU. IN ANOTHER EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION WALDHEIM, BY LETTER, APPEALED TO THE OAU PRESIDENT (GABON) BUT TO DATE HAS RECEIVED NO REPLY. COMMENT: IF DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTIONS, AMBASSADOR WILL MAKE A DEMARCHE TO GABONESE AMBASSADOR IN GENEVA AND EXPRESS THE SERIOUS CONCERN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ETHIOPIA AND SUGGEST THAT THE OAU

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CONSIDER THIS ISSUE AS A PRIORITY ITEM AT ITS NEXT MEETING. END COMMENT.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY BY THE AMBASSADOR, BUFFUM SAID THAT ISRAEL WAS THE ONLY WESTERN UN MEMBER STATE MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AND THAT ISRAEL MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO MAKE A DEMARCHE TO THE GOE ABOUT THE LATTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION.

4. VAN BOVEN SUGGESTED THAT ONE OR SEVERAL MEMBER STATES MIGHT RAISE THE ISSUE DURING THE SPRING ECOSOC. WHILE THERE IS A GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION THAT ETHIOPIA WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED PUBLICLY, IT IS VAN BOVEN'S VIEW THAT THE AGREEMENT IS NOT BINDING ON ECOSOC (THE REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IS SCHEDULED FOR CONSIDERATION THE WEEK OF MAY 24). VAN BOVEN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT IN ADDITION TO COMMUNICATIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS ON THE ETHIOPIAN ISSUE, NGO'S, E.G., THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, COULD FORWARD REPORTS ON THE COUNTRY TO THE SUB-COMMISSION.

5. THE AMBASSADOR, TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF UGANDA, ASKED WHAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN FINDING A

DISTINGUISHED AFRICAN TO LOOK AT THAT COUNTRY'S HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. BUFFUM REPLIED THAT CHIEF ADEBO OF NIGERIA HAD REFUSED THE MISSION BECAUSE HE IS INVOLVED IN DRAFTING A NEW GON CONSTITUTION. FOUR OTHER NAMES FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED (CAMEROONS, SIERRA LEONE AND GHANDA) AND THE HRD IS FOLLOWING UP ON THESE SUGGESTIONS. BUFFUM OFFERED THE EXPLANATION THAT AN EMISSARY FOR SUCH A POSITION WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIND SINCE NOBODY WANTED TO GET INVOLVED. CHIEF ADEBO HAD SUGGESTED A NIGERIAN WHO WAS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTIC.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 05695

STATE FOR MZVINSKY

6. ON CHILE, THE AMBASSADOR SAID IT APPEARED THAT PINOCHET WAS WILLING TO PERMIT ENTRY OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP BUT THAT THERE STILL MIGHT BE A PROBLEM IF CHAIRMAN ALLANA, WHO IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOC, PERSISTS ON LEADING THE TEAM. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE WG WAS DENIED ENTRY AGAIN BECAUSE OF PERSONALITY CONFLICTS. BUFFUM CONCURRED AND SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO "REVIVE ALLANA'S ILLNESS" WHICH HAD BEEN SUGGESTED AS A FACE-SAVING DEVICE IN THE PAST AND THUS ALLOW THE GROUP TO MAKE ITS TRIP TO CHILE. VAN BOVEN AGREED THAT ALLANA WAS A MAJOR PROBLEM BUT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOC AMBASSADOR (DIEZ) HAD MADE A VERY RIGID STATEMENT AT THE LAST HRC SESSION STATING THAT CHILE WOULD DEAL ONLY WITH THE UN SYG. IF

THIS IS CHILE'S FIRM POSITION, VAN BOVEN BELIEVES
DIFFICULTIES WILL ARISE REGARDING THE RULES AND
PROCEDURES OF THE WG. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IT
APPEARED THAT REPRESENTATIVE MEZVINSKY HAD SUCCEEDED IN
ENCOURAGING A MORE INTELLIGENT, POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM
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THE GOC.

7. BUFFUM SAID THERE WERE RUMORS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE
OAS MIGHT SEND A TEAM TO CHILE TO LOOK AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATION AND EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN THAT THERE HAS NOT
BEEN A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OAS AND THE UN ON
THIS MATTER. VAN BOVEN STATED HIS AWARENESS OF THE
COORDINATION GAP BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS AND SAID
THAT HE IS PLANNING A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH OAS
OFFICIALS TO SEE IF MORE INTERACTION CAN BE ESTABLISHED.
VANDEN HEUVEL, WHILE APPLAUDING SUCH NEGOTIATIONS,
STRESSED THE INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF CHILEAN
ACCEPTANCE OF THE UN AND OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP, AND
RECOMMENDED THAT EFFORTS FOR THE WG'S VISIT BE
CONTINUED. HE POINTED OUT THAT IF THE GOC ACCEPTED THE
WG AND A RESPONSIBLE REPORT RESULTED, IT WOULD ENHANCE THE
UNHRC AND THE HRD AND SERVE AS A MAJOR PRESSURE AND
PRECEDENT FOR OTHER COUNTRIES.

8. IN THE DISCUSSION ON CAMBODIA, THE AMBASSADOR POINTED
OUT THAT THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION ON THAT
COUNTRY DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT SOURCES SHOULD BE USED FOR
GATHERING INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION. WITH SUCH A
BROAD MANDATE HE SUGGESTED THAT THE HR DIVISION USE ALL
AVAILABLE SOURCES FOR DRAFTING ITS REPORT, INCLUDING THE
US GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE TRIBUNAL ON
CAMBODIA (OSLO, APRIL 20-23) BE USED AS A SOURCE FOR
INFORMATION GATHERING.

9. VAN BOVEN EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION, NOTING THAT THE
DIVISION HAD VERY LITTLE DATA FOR THIS SITUATION AND HE
WOULD FOLLOW UP ON THE AMBASSADOR'S SUGGESTIONS.
VANDEN HEUVEL

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